VS
RATEL!!
BEAR
CHAPTER 9
FOR WHICH OF THESE TWO
WILL THE REFEREE'S FLAG RIIIIIIIISE?
READY...

CHAPTER 9:
YOU NEED TO OVERCOME YOUR INSTINCTS.

RATEL'S WEAKNESS?
3
WHAT DO YOU MEAN,
LEO?
SHE'LL DESTROY HERSELF,
JUST LIKE I TOLD YOU.
THAT IS VERY LIKELY...
HOW-EVER...

LIKE YOU SAID,
SHE'S AN UNKNOWN VARIABLE.
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND HER FIGHTING STYLE FOR VERY LONG, WILL YOU?
LOOK AT YOUR STARTING POSITIONS.
IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT YOU'LL END UP FIGHTING EACH OTHER AT THE VERY BEGINNING, BEFORE EITHER OF YOU ARE INJURED.
.....
RATEL IS...
WEAK.

I REMEMBER THE BATTLE FROM BEFORE.
HER POWER AND SPEED ARE ON PAR WITH MINE.
I MIGHT NEED A COUNTER-MEASURE.
I STILL DON'T GET HOW YOU LOST TO HER.
BUT THAT'S ALL.

TELL ME, LEO.
BACK THEN...
HOW THE HELL DID THAT HAPPEN?
IT'S SIMPLE.

TO START WITH...
THAT GIRL HAS ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE IN HER DEFENSIVE POWER.
SO SHE TAKES ATTACKS ON PURPOSE
TO OBSERVE THEM.
TO DETERMINE WHAT HER ENEMY'S ATTACK IS
AND COUNTER IT.
SHE PROVOKES HER OPPONENT AND LEAVES HERSELF FULL OF OPENINGS
AS A BLUFF TO LURE THEM INTO ATTACKING.
THAT IS...

YOU CAN TURN THE TABLES ON HER.
BUT AS LONG AS YOU UNDER-STAND THAT...
AND WHEN SHE GETS CLOSE AND LOWERS HER GUARD...
THE MOMENT YOU TWO MEET, YOU SHOULD TAKE HER ATTACK ON PURPOSE,
IN ITS ENTIRETY.
RATEL'S TACTIC
7
YOU CAN DO THAT, CAN'T YOU?
FINISH HER IN ONE HIT WITH YOUR STRONGEST ATTACK.
HIT HER WITH A DEATHBLOW.
THE POWER OF THE BEAR...
YOU POSSESS ONE OF THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE FORCES IN KILLING BITES.
NO...

JEROME HONGO.
THE POWER OF THE STRONGEST SUMO WRESTLER IN MAKUSHITA.
.....
3 YEARS AGO

RING
OUUUUUT!!

JEROME HONGO
FINISHES IT WITH A SINGLE SLAP!!
A COMPLETE VICTORY SHOWING THE OVERWHELMING DIFFERENCE IN POWER!!
THE STRONGEST SUMO WRESTLER IN MAKUSHITA HAS BEEN BORN!!

DON'T CAUSE A SCENE.
YOU'RE DRINKING TOO MUCH.
GAHAHA!!
C'MON, GET THAT STICK OUTTA YER ASS!!
NICE ONE, JEROME!!
GAHAHAHAHAHA!!
COULD I GET YOUR AUTOGRAPH?
MR. JEROME,
SURE.
HM?
GEHEHEH.
BEING POPULAR'S TOUGH...
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING...
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

DIE,
YOU MATCH-FIXER...

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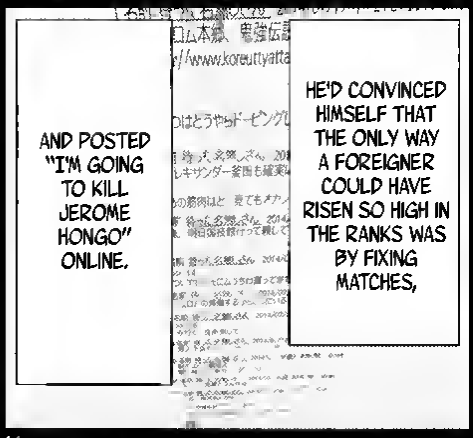
MUR-
EEEEEEEEK!!
MURDERER!!
MURDER-
EEEEEE-
EEER!!


AND POSTED "I'M GOING TO KILL JEROME HONGO" ONLINE.
HE'D CONVINCED HIMSELF THAT THE ONLY WAY A FOREIGNER COULD HAVE RISEN SO HIGH IN THE RANKS WAS BY FIXING MATCHES,

A VERY ENTHUSIASTIC FAN OF PROFESSIONAL SUMO WRESTLING.
THE CRIMINAL WAS...

HE KNEW.
BUT
JEROME COULDN'T BE BLAMED FOR WHAT HE HAD DONE
THIS WAS JUSTIFIED SELF-DEFENSE.

HIS HANDS
HAD BECOME LETHAL WEAPONS.
HE RETIRED.
HEADLINES ACROSS THE WORLD SAID THINGS LIKE "HIS MENTAL WEAKNESS HAS BEEN EXPOSED"
OR "THE STRONGEST SUMO WRESTLER WRESTLES WITH THE WEIGHT OF HIS SIN."
IT WASN'T THAT HE BLAMED HIMSELF.
ON THE CONTRARY,
HE WANTED MORE.

HE WANTED A PLACE
WHERE HE WOULD BE FREE TO USE THIS POWER OF HIS.
JEROME HONGO.
YOU WANT A PLACE
TO BELONG IN THIS WORLD.

KILLING BITES.
THAT IS
17
EVERYTHING IS PERMITTED.
BUT IT'S TOO BAD.
YOU CAN CRUSH YOUR OPPONENTS, OR YOU CAN KILL THEM.
THERE, VICTORY IS EVERYTHING.
THERE IS A CONDITION TO PARTICIPATE IN KILLING BITES.
THAT IS...
AS YOU ARE NOW, YOU AREN'T STRONG ENOUGH.

TO UNDERGO THE BESTIALIZATION OPERATION.
THE BESTIALIZATION OPERATION...
USES NANOTECHNOLOGY TO GRANT STRENGTH AT A GENETIC LEVEL...
AND REMODELS THE HUMAN BODY
TO ENABLE IT TO BRING OUT THE AGGRESSIVENESS AND APPEARANCE OF A WILD ANIMAL.
IT BROUGHT OUT THE POTENTIAL IN HIS GENES.
THAT IS...

THE LARGEST OF ITS KIND IS THREE METERS TALL AND WEIGHS 500 KG.
THE BEAR.

AND WITH ITS TERRIFYING ARM STRENGTH,
THEIR LARGE BODIES CAN RUN AT SPEEDS OF 60 KM/H.
IT CAN DELIVER AN INCREDIBLY POWERFUL SLAP

COULD NOT HAVE REACHED THIS LEVEL THROUGH MERE TRAINING.
JEROME HONGO'S SLAP

OF THE BEAST WITHIN HIM.
HE HAD TO BRING OUT THE INSTINCTS

THAT IS TO SAY...
THAT NO HUMAN CAN POSSIBLY DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST.

CAPABLE OF DELIVERING A ONE-HIT KILL.
TO BECOME A WEAPON OF DESTRUCTION

BEAR
PALM

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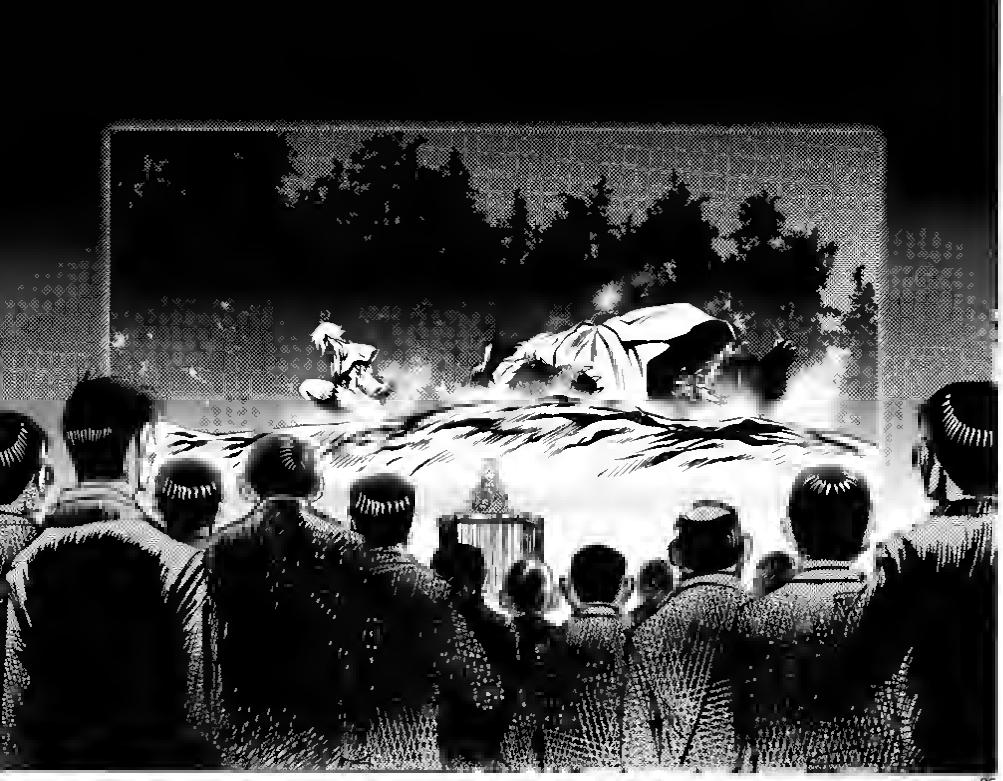

WHA—

A ONE-HIT KO!
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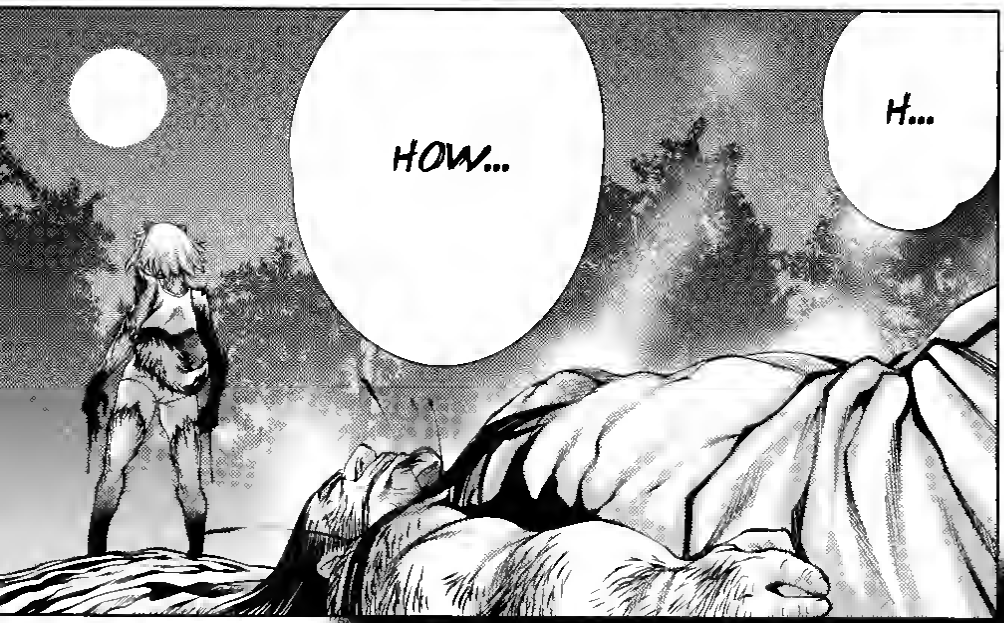
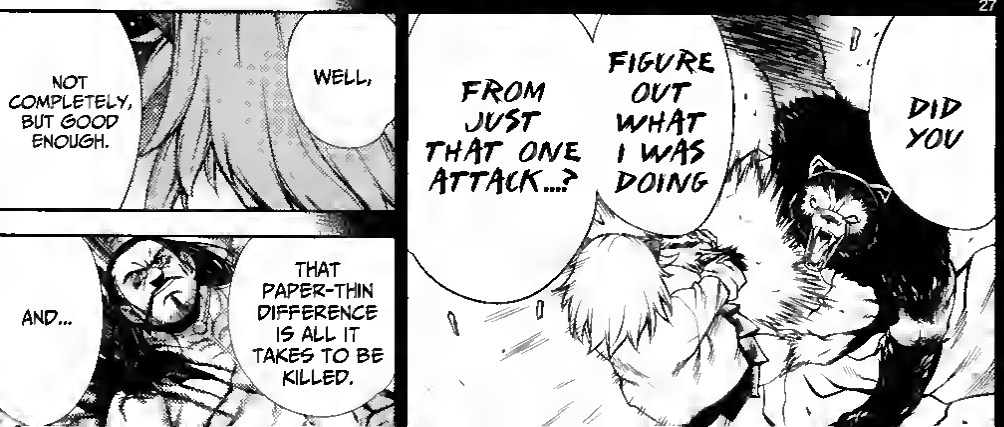

H...
HOW...


DID YOU
FIGURE OUT WHAT I WAS DOING
FROM JUST THAT ONE ATTACK...?
WELL,
NOT COMPLETELY, BUT GOOD ENOUGH.
AND...
THAT PAPER-THIN DIFFERENCE IS ALL IT TAKES TO BE KILLED.

THE ONE WITH THE SHARPEST FANGS WINS.
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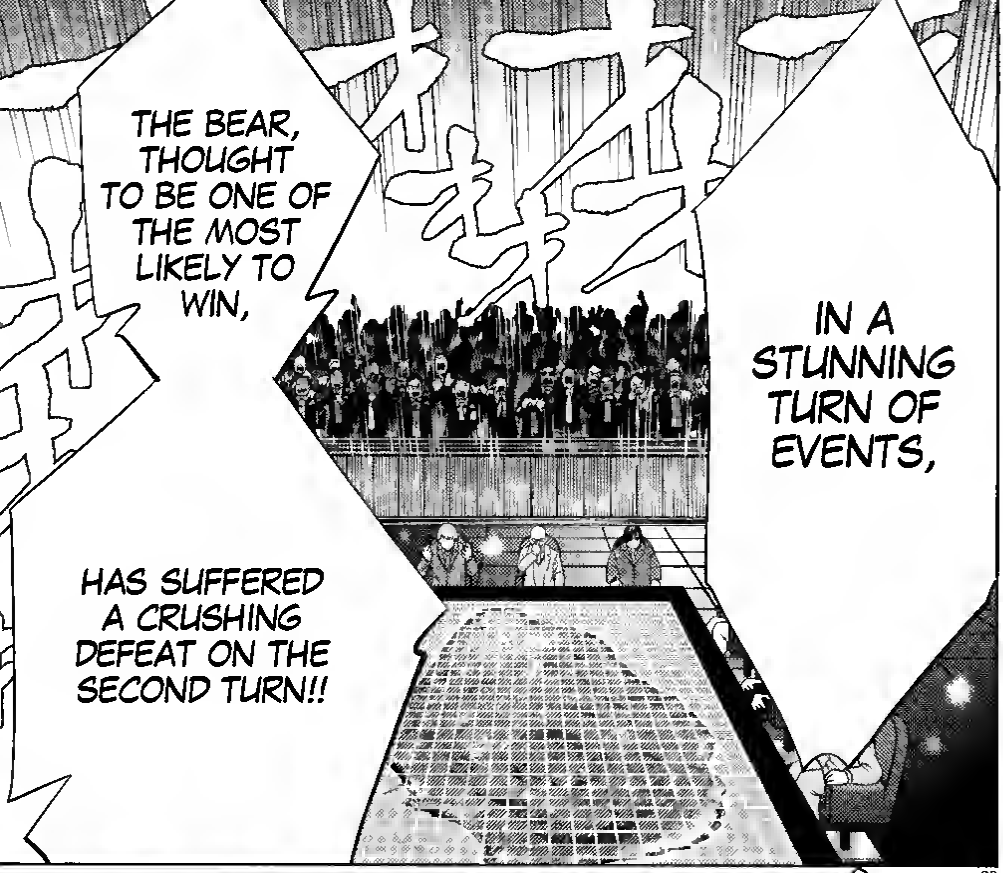
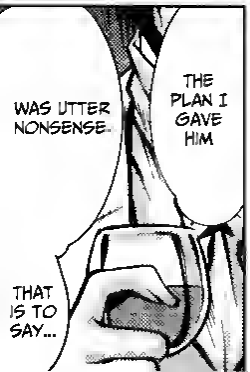
THUS,
KILLING BITES.


THE BEAR, THOUGHT TO BE ONE OF THE MOST LIKELY TO WIN,
IN A STUNNING TURN OF EVENTS,
HAS SUFFERED A CRUSHING DEFEAT ON THE SECOND TURN!!

WHAT WAS THAT TECH-NIQUE...?
WH-
WHAT WAS THAT...?

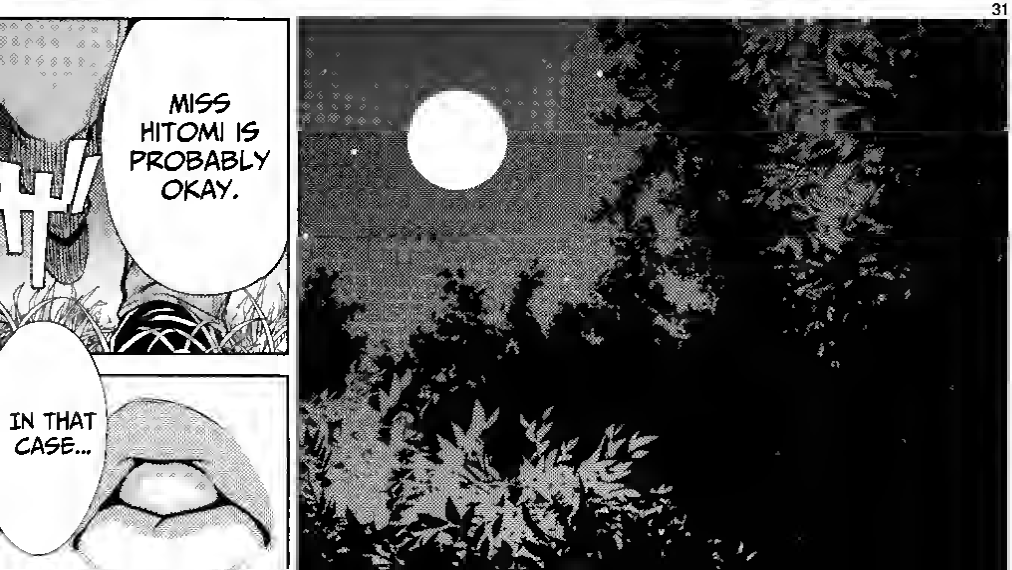

WAS UTTER NONSENSE.
THE PLAN I GAVE HIM
THAT IS TO SAY...

SLASH.

MY BEAR WAS... IN ONE HIT...
I- IMPOSSI-BLE!

THE ONLY WAY TO DEFEAT HER
IS, AS SHE SAID, TO HAVE SHARPER FANGS THAN SHE DOES.
IN OTHER WORDS,
YOU NEED TO
OVERCOME YOUR INSTINCTS.
THAT'S ALL.
HUH.
IT LOOKS LIKE
HE'LL BE A TOUGHER OPPONENT
THAN I THOUGHT HE'D BE.
I'D LIKE TO SETTLE THINGS QUICKLY,
BUT GIVEN THE CIRCUM-STANCES,
IT WOULD BE BETTER TO MEET UP WITH MY OTHER ALLY
LOOK.

NOMOTO YUUYA.
MY PIECE
WILL UTTERLY CRUSH
YOUR PIECE.

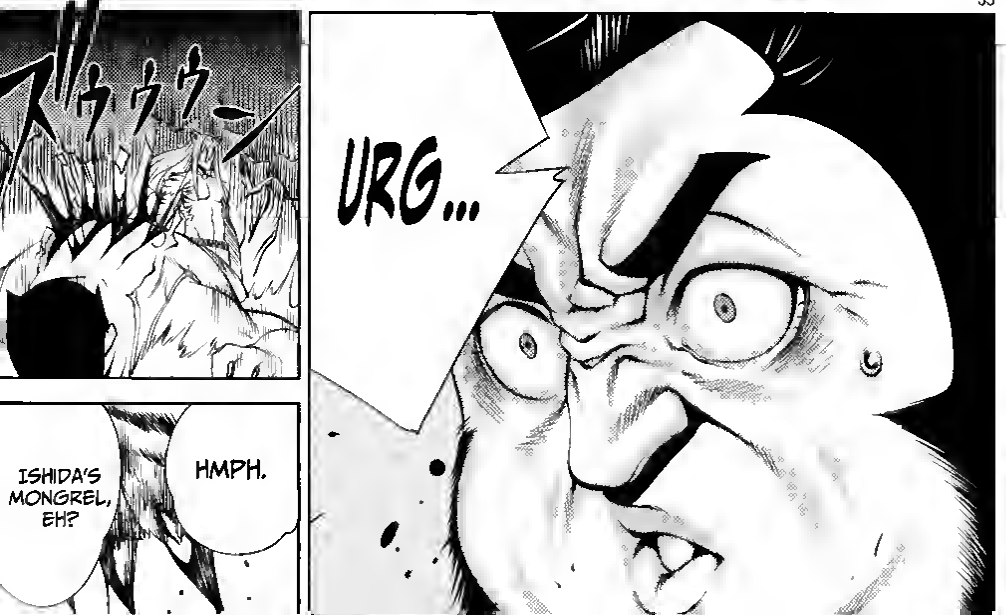

MISS HITOMI IS PROBABLY OKAY.
IN THAT CASE...

IF I END MY TURN IN THIS FOREST,

I WON'T GET TO SHOW OFF MY REAL POWER.

I HAVE TO GET SOME-WHERE OPEN

BEFORE ANOTHER PIECE COMES AFTER ME.


スウウーン
URG...
HMPH.
ISHIDA'S MONGREL, EH?

ONE DOWN.
THAT'S
TIGER BRUTE
TAIGA NAKANISHI

YOU COULDN'T EVEN LET ME PASS SOME TIME.
SUCH SUFFERING.

HOLD IT.
NO BIG DEAL.
YOU'RE A PRETTY RUDE GUY.
BUT THAT'S
LOOKS LIKE YOU REALLY ARE AS FAST AS THEY SAY.

GONNA SAY HI?
ARE YOU NOT EVEN
HIPPOPOTAMUS BRUTE
ICHINOSUKE OKAJIMA

BEFORE I WAS ABLE TO ATTACK YOU...
SO YOU TRANSFORMED YOUR BACK
HMPH.

HE'S STRONG.
.....
BUT
THE NEXT BLOW WILL END THIS.
I SEE.
THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE AS EASY AS THE LAST ONE
AT THIS RATE
I CAN'T EVEN SEE HIS ATTACKS.

I THOUGHT A FEW PIECES WOULD GATHER HERE.
LOOKS LIKE IT REALLY DID HAPPEN.

YOU DO LOOK SCARY,
TIGER.
TH—
THE MITSUKADO ZAIBATSU'S BRUTE.
MITSUKADO, ISHIDA, AND SUMITOMO WILL TEAM UP
TO TAKE DOWN YATSU-BISHI.

WHEN YOU WANT TO PLAY DIRTY.
THAT'S HOW YOU THINK

SO IT'S GOING TO BE THREE-ON-ONE.
THE SUMITOMO ZAIBATSU'S BRUTE...
THAT TIGER...
SOUNDS FUN.
I COULD DO IT BY MYSELF.
I REALLY DON'T THINK

NOW I'VE GOT THREE MONGRELS TO PLAY WITH.
MAYBE I'LL EVEN BE ABLE TO SHARPEN MY CLAWS ON YOU.
COME.
I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT HELL LOOKS LIKE.